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SUBJECT: 98TH U.S.-GREECE JOINT COMMISSION: MEETING SUMMARY

11. (SBU) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: The 98th session of the U.S.-Greek Joint Commission dealing with bilateral political-military issues, particularly relations between the U.S. Souda Naval Support Activity (NSA) in Crete and the Government of Greece (GoG), was held in Athens on February 28 and made progress on a number of significant issues. On the Marathi fuel pipeline, Greek JC Co-Chairman Grigorios Vassiloconstandakis said he expected that after a little time to get acclimated, the new mayor of Akrotiri was likely to give approval to the project. The Greek-language version of the NATO 302 customs form had been finished and sent to Greek customs offices, which should begin using it shortly. The GoG was exploring several ways to solve the problem of black fuel dye, which has been a nuisance for the U.S. but has cost Greece millions of euros in lost revenue. The GoG believed it must submit not only the latest amendment to the ACSA agreement to Parliament for ratification but the entire agreement; U.S. JC Co-Chairman DCM Thomas Countryman expressed concern that Parliamentary inaction or disapproval of the ACSA could complicate U.S.-Greek cooperation. The U.S. side briefed on the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act, which the Greek side would study at length. The Greek side also said that a number of NSA requests on land-use projects had been approved or were on track to be approved. COMMENT: The U.S. side was very impressed with the performance of Greek Co-Chairman Vassiloconstandakis, who has proved to be efficient and straightforward. We hope that his performance thus far will continue in future JC cooperation. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

Marathi Fuel Pipeline -----

12. (SBU) The existing JP-5 fuel pipeline was installed at NSA in 1976 to provide fuel capability for NSA air field operations. Over the last five years, the pipeline has experienced a significant internal degradation and is in need of replacement. Replacement of the line has been hampered, however, by local officials' refusal to give excavation permits. Vassiloconstandakis said that he had gone to Souda the previous week and met the new mayor. The new mayor had a positive attitude toward cooperation with NSA and understood the need for a solution to the problem of the fuel pipeline. The mayor asked for a little time to get his feet on the ground and then would present the issue to the town council, which he expected would give its approval. DCM emphasized that the sooner the mayor and council gave approval, the sooner the U.S. side could have funding re-instated.

NATO Form 302) Status of Greek Translation

13. (SBU) Customs officials have been inconsistent in their willingness to accept the standard U.S. version of NATO form 302, which NSA and other U.S. military operations in Greece needed for various import/export purposes. Vassiloconstandakis said that a couple of weeks ago the MFA had an interagency meeting with the approving authorities from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and were told that the 302 form was finished and already had been sent to customs offices all over Greece. He said that at the beginning it might be a little trying but the form's use should be normalized soon. The DCM asked for a copy of the regulation that was sent to the customs offices and Vassiloconstandakis gave him the number of the regulation: T851/12/B0019/19 Feb 12007.

Fuel Color -----

14. (SBU) DCM explained that the GoG decision to add black dye to marine fuel oil meant that Sealift Vessels could not verify the purity of the fuel through visual inspection. As a result, U.S. vessels were buying fuel from suppliers in other countries, which was inconvenient for the U.S. but was costing Greece millions of euros in lost income from oil sales, as well as lost purchases by visiting sailors at Greek ports. Vassiloconstandakis said the GoG was considering a couple of solutions to the problem. He said that the U.S. ships were also NATO ships and with a ministerial degree, all NATO ships could be exempted from adding the black dye to the fuel. Another solution was to use another, non-opaque color, which would allow the U.S. Navy to perform its "clear and bright" visual tests on Greek marine fuel samples.

Status of ACSA Amendment -----

15. (SBU) The Greek Co-Chair said MFA Legal and MoF Legal now believe the initial Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA) signed in 1996, as well as more recently proposed amendments, must be ratified by the Parliament. (NOTE: ACSA is a bi-lateral agreement that allows Greece and the United States to exchange military logistics services, such as transportation and repair. The original agreement was regarded as a working-level document and was never submitted to the Greek Parliament for approval. END COMMENT.) He proposed that a new text identical to the existing ACSA be drafted incorporating the proposed amendments and be sent for ratification to the Greek Parliament. The Greek Co-Chair believed this was the easiest way to have the ACSA ratified. The DCM asked whether we could continue using the old agreement until the new agreement was ratified. The Greek Co-Chair said he would ask and inform us. Vassiloconstandakis responded negatively to Col May's question whether by ratifying the amendment the Greek Parliament would implicitly ratify the underlying agreement as well.

DETE Customs Inspection Fees -----

16. (SBU) The U.S. side explained that the Greek MoF's March 2006 decision to collect inspection fees for customs inspections was not allowed under the SOFA. Vassiloconstandakis said he understood the problem but argued that DETE was not a tax but a fee for services rendered. The Greek Co-Chair said perhaps DETE could continue to be levied but waived for U.S. forces. The DCM countered that such a procedure would set a negative precedent and seemed inconsistent with the SOFA. The Greek Co-Chair said he understood U.S. concern and proposed that the U.S. legal and MFA and MoF legal get together and find a solution. He requested the U.S. side send a Dip Note explaining the problem.

Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act (MEJA) -----

17. (SBU) The U.S. side explained that MEJA was U.S. legislation permitting the United States to prosecute

civilians for crimes they committed overseas while accompanying the U.S. military and did not alter existing multilateral or bilateral arrangements. The Greek delegation said that they did not see any areas for concern but would study the issues further before signing a confirmation statement.

Land Lease Update

¶18. (SBU) NSA needs additional land to increase the stand off distance and force protection posture at Souda Bay. Without this addition, NSA cannot utilize 30 dormitory rooms located close to the base perimeter. The U.S. originally requested permission to lease land outside of the perimeter fence in June 2000 and the request has been taken up at JC meetings ever since. Vassiloconstandakis said he now has information that the pertinent Greek authorities finalized their work on Dec 15, 2006. They had finished the expropriation procedures and were now in the public-comment phase, waiting for possible objections from land-owners. There were no objections so far. The time that the owners had to object was unclear, but less than a year.

Project - New Communication Circuit

¶19. (SBU) NSA has had an unforeseen surge in their communications requirements and is at maximum, or near maximum, capacity on their existing bandwidth. The Defense Information Technology Contracting Organization - Europe (DITCO-Europe) wants to increase the telecommunications bandwidth at NSA with a 45 MB circuit from Capodichino, Italy. CDR High told the JC that the increase in the telecommunication bandwidth would help Souda overcome limitations due to the current circuit saturation. The Greek side was in favor of the new Communication circuit and asked whether Greek forces at Souda could also take advantage of this. CDR High said yes. The Greek Co-Chair said he would forward the request.

New Project) New Navy Exchange Construction Project (P-744)

¶10. (SBU) NSA wishes to construct a new Navy Exchange (NEX). The construction is estimated to cost 9 million dollars and must commence soon in order to spend time-sensitive fiscal year funds. The Navy needs the project to increase on-base Navy Exchange (NEX) storage capacity and retail floor space. The current NEX was designed to service a base population of 130 military personnel and visiting ships. The base military population is now 387 and the number of ships visiting Marathi Piers, including NATO ships, has increased by 75%. Vassiloconstandakis said the GoG had approved the project and notification was en route.

Approval of Security Department Use of Portable Armory

¶11. (SBU) NSA would like to install a portable armory at building 56. The project would allow implementation of procedures that are consistent with USN, NATO, and host-nation safety and security regulations for the protection of weapons and ammunition. NSA already has suitable hardware available, equipped with required intruder detection systems. The new armory would not cause NSA Souda Bay to initiate any modifications to their current security manning levels, number of weapons, or ammunition levels. Vassiloconstandakis said the GoG had approved the project.

Approval to Use Portable Fire Training Trailer

¶12. (SBU) On October 30, 2006, NSA commander Capt. Sale sent a letter to the Greek representative at Souda Bay asking for "approval to construct a concrete pad where a mobile Fire Department training trailer will be placed." The Fire Department training trailer is a CONEX-sized box that will be

intentionally set on fire so fire crews can practice extinguishing real flames. A concrete pad is needed so that the practice burns can be kept safe. Without underlying containment infrastructure, heat and flames could escape from the Fire Dept training trailer and ignite non-intended material. Greek Souda commander Colonel Kontogiannis said he would get an answer from HAF in about a week.

NEXT MEETING DATE

¶13. (SBU) It was agreed to hold the next JC at Souda Bay in July.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

¶14. (SBU) Meeting participants included the following:

U.S. Delegation:

Mr. Thomas Countryman, DCM
Dr. Paul Carter, Chief, Political-Military Affairs
Col. Steve Boukedes, Chief, Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC)
Lt. Col. Rob May, ODC
Ms. Cathy Hirt, ODC
Ms. Alexandra Karavasilli, ODC
Commander Wayne High, Executive Officer, Souda Bay NSA
Mr. Bruce Gale, Executive Assistant, Souda Bay NSA
Lt. Brett Cook, JAG, Souda Bay NSA
Major Kiriakos Kalogiannis, USMC, ODC

Greek Delegation:

MFA

Mr. Grigorios Vassiloconstandakis, Acting Director A7 Department
Ms. Panagiota Konstantinopoulou, A7 Department
Ms. Jenny Stavridi, Legal Department
Mr. Michael Stelakatos, Legal Department

HNDGS

Commodore A. Giokas, IRD
Col. G. Petkos, IRD
Col. L. Assimakis

Hellenic Navy

Capt. A. Krimiotis, G2

Hellenic Air Force

Col. I. Kontogiannis, 115th CW (NOTE: Since the JC, Kontogiannis has been promoted to Brigadier.)
Lt. Col. A. Oglanis, C5/III
Ms. Konstantina Vlachogianni, Civil Engineer, C5/III
CWO A. Renieris, 115th CW
RIES